



Christian Jade, « Every Direction Is North. Karine Ponties joue sur l'élan et la virtuosité pour vaincre la mélancolie. », RTBF 7<sup>th</sup> February 2020,

[https://www.rtbf.be/culture/scene/detail\\_every-direction-is-north-karine-ponties-joue-sur-l-elan-et-la-virtuosite-pour-vaincre-la-melancolie?id=10427618](https://www.rtbf.be/culture/scene/detail_every-direction-is-north-karine-ponties-joue-sur-l-elan-et-la-virtuosite-pour-vaincre-la-melancolie?id=10427618)

## "Every Direction Is North". Karine Ponties plays on energy and virtuosity to win over melancholy. \*\*\*



EVERY DIRECTION IS NORTH by KARINE PONTIES - © Alexander Kabanov

*Christian Jade*

*Published on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2020 – Updated Friday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2020 at 21h50*

**"The Raft of the Medusa" is never very far from the choreographic dreams of Karine Ponties's company Dame de Pic. Between dream and reality, nightmare and catastrophe, the group and the individual are always caught in between conflict and solidarity as they try to answer one question: who leads whom, who drags whom, and where to ?**

A little metaphysical, and definitely virtuoso, this *Every Direction Is North*. Thanks to the little 'luxury' of seven Russian dancers of a diabolic agility and grace inhabiting the space with a lighter, more optimistic and open movement than usually. We are far from the pieces that made this company's reputation, *Holeulone* (Critics' Prize 2007) and *Humus Vertebra*, with scarecrows appearing from the edge of one of Hieronymus Bosch's paintings.

The same anguish can be found at the top of the show; from the shadows, appears a small individual, his head stuck into a box from which emanate confused, inarticulate sounds. The articulation comes from a group that appears suddenly, but remains tightly confined in a space where the miracle is surviving. The evening's first performance is this ability the seven dancers have to co-exist in a stifling space, until it progressively opens up and unravels on the big stage of the Théâtre National. Life-like?

The group then finds/feels their freedom, their ability to organize themselves, to endure and throw themselves in this vast emptiness, the North or infinity, the earth, the sky, a combination of both? The metaphysics of the piece ground themselves in the manipulation of simple wooden set pieces that quickly transform themselves into concrete spaces: a room, a table, a wardrobe, other everyday objects that evidently served as improvisational spaces for the ensemble. The melancholy (and the tight space of their initial prison) resurfaces only at the end, inevitable... yet not unsurmountable. As if the initial Raft of the Medusa were an option, a starting point to face the every day by inventing creative group dynamics.

But dance isn't only philosophy. It can also be experienced for what it is: seven dancers thoroughly enjoying themselves, coexisting in simple or complex spaces that they create and transform as needed, with a moment in the limelight for every performer who delivers circus artist-like bodies surrounded by a supporting ensemble.

In the end, what is tangible is a communicative pleasure, an exchange between Karine Ponties (and her existential anguishes) and the overflowing joy of performing by these seven dancers. The exchange between two ways of practicing dance produces a tiny miracle, one that was awarded the prestigious Golden Mask for the Best Contemporary Dance Piece in Russia in 2017. Hard not to see the pleasure that everybody involved takes in playing with difficult dance technicalities, enumerated by Karine (*jerky trajectories, untimely deviations, fulgurances, abrupt stops, spacial graphs*), and that express tenderness, compassion and a childhood spirit.

A strong piece, like an instant of dynamic and luminous happiness in the Ponties orbit, drawn, this time, more towards Saturn than Apollo.

**"Every Direction Is North". Karine Ponties**

**[At Théâtre National](#) until February 8<sup>th</sup>, February 11<sup>th</sup> at [Cultuurcentrum de Bruges](#), February 14<sup>th</sup> at les [Écuries de Charleroi Danse](#).**